

Historic Restoration of the Gallaudet Monument (1854)

American School For The Deaf

Historic Significance

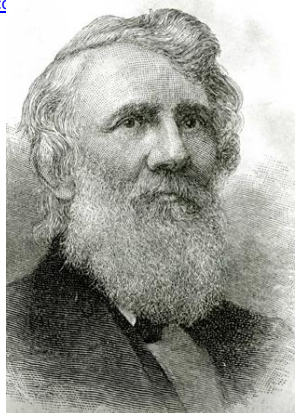
The Reverend Thomas H. Gallaudet (1787-1851)

The Reverend Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc, at the bequest of Dr. Mason F. Cogswell, co-established an institution for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut in 1816. After opening its doors for the first deaf students in 1817, and under the guidance of the Rev. Gallaudet as principal, the institution became the first continually operated school for the deaf in the United States, and remains so today. Since the school's founding, the Rev. Gallaudet's efforts have elevated the education of students and teachers of the deaf community across the country, acting as national role model for education and humanity. Additionally, the American School for the Deaf is recognized as the birthplace of American Sign Language, which was created through a combination of French Sign Language, Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, and the home signs of ASD's first students. To commemorate Gallaudet's significant contributions to the Deaf Community in America, the Gallaudet Monument was erected at the Hartford school in 1854.

Monument Design



Portrait of Albert Newsam.
Image: Wikipedia https://upload.wikimedia.org/v_1850.jpg



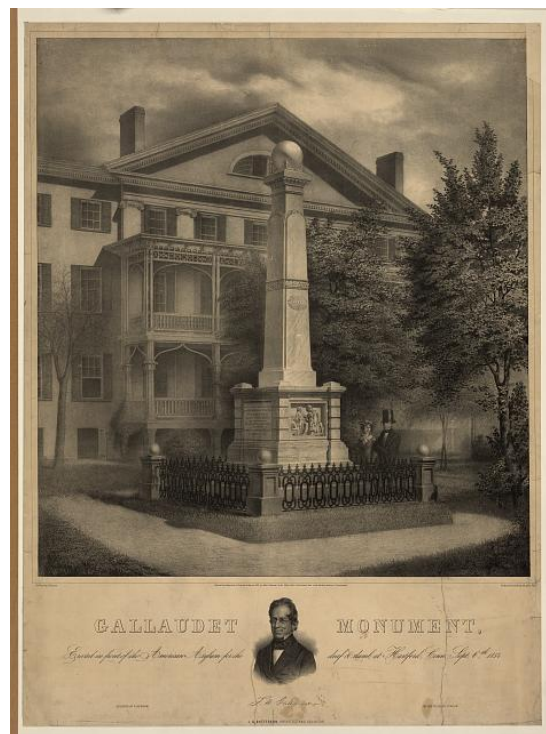
Portrait of John Carlin.
Image: Smithsonian American Art Museum
<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/john-carlin-743>

The monument was designed by Albert Newsam (1809-1864), an accomplished deaf artist based in Philadelphia. Newsam became a principal artist for printer Peter S. Duval and George Leman. According to the Historical Society of Philadelphia, Albert Newsam Print Collection, Collection v-100, Newsam elevated the art of lithography in the United States.

Newsam designed a stately monument with two granite base units that supported a decorative, marble structure. The marble components consisted of a lower decorative molding base that elevated a central die. The die had four, cubed, end columns and four relief panels. A decorative cornice rested above the die block. An elegant, tapering, central column rose from a small base set atop the lower stones and was capped by a decorative cornice and globe.

The relief panels were designed by John Carlin (1813-1891), a New York, deaf artist. Carlin studied abroad, returning to Philadelphia, and later moving to New York, to become an accomplished painter and writer. The Smithsonian American Art Museum archives attribute Carlin to have encouraged Rev. Gallaudet's son, Edward, to establish an academy for the deaf, which came to fruition with the opening of Gallaudet College. Carlin was awarded the college's first degree with a Master of Arts in 1865.

The front relief panel designed for the Gallaudet Monument depicts a seated Gallaudet teaching signing to three children. The relief is in high relief and of excellent craftsmanship.



Lithograph of Gallaudet Monument by Albert Newsam, 1855. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pqa.02292>

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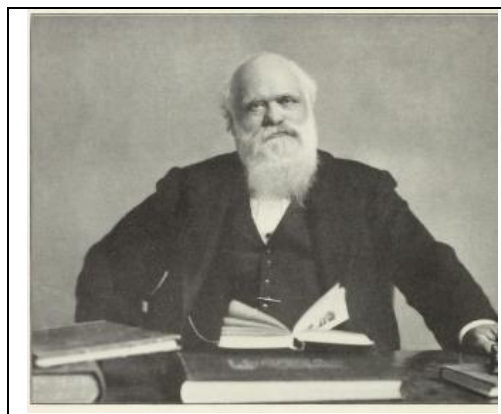
The side panels are incised with the following text:

East:

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, LL.D.,
Born in Philadelphia,
December 10, 1787
Died in Hartford,
September 10, 1851
Aged Sixty-Four Years.

West:

Erected to the Memory of
Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, LL.D.,
By the Deaf and Dumb
Of the United States,
As a Testimonial
Of Profound Gratitude
To Their
Earliest and Best Friend
And Benefactor.



Portrait of James G. Batterson.
Image: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_G._Batterson#/media/File:James_Goodwin_Batterson.png

Carlin designed the back panel with “GALLAUDET” represented in manual alphabet. As with the front carving, the design and carving quality is exquisite, as represented by a saved fragment in the archives of the Cogswell Heritage House, ASD. This unique, artistic work may be the first representation of the manual alphabet on a monument in the United States.

James G. Batterson (1823-1901)

The monument was fabricated by the James G. Batterson’s Marble Steam Works in Hartford and the relief carvings hand chiseled by their studio carver, Mr. Argenti. According to David F. Ransom’s *Connecticut’s Monumental Epoch: A survey of Civil War Memorials*, The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, Vol. 58, Numbers 1-4, Batterson began primarily as cemetery monument and gravestone producer that became a leader in the design and fabrication of public

monuments. He began business in Hartford in 1846 as James G. Batterson, marble manufacturer. In 1854 he formed the Batterson’s Steam Marble Works, which changed names to Batterson’s Monumental works in 1856, and Batterson and Canfield in 1870, and eventually New England Granite Works in 1875. Batterson became one of the most prominent monument designers and fabricators in America during the 19th century. Prominent monuments and structures attributed to Batterson include the following:

- 1854 – Gallaudet Monument, Hartford, CT
- 1857 – Worth Monument, New York, NY
- 1864 – Samuel Colt Monument, Hartford, CT
- 1869 – Soldiers’ National Monument, Gettysburg National Cemetery, PA
- 1878 – Connecticut State Capitol, Hartford, CT
- 1880 – Private Soldier Monument, Antietam National Cemetery, MD
- 1890 – Garfield National Memorial
- 1897 – Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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In 1864 Batterson broadened his business interests and began the Travelers Insurance Company. His passion for art and collecting contributed to the holdings of the oldest, continuously operating public art museum to this day, the Wadsworth Atheneum, founded in 1842 in Hartford, CT. Batterson's life accomplishments have made lasting impact on the State of Connecticut and the nation.

American Public Art and Monuments

Not only is the monument historically significant given the preceding information, but also within the development of American public art and monuments. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, *From Model to Monument: American Public Sculpture, 1865-1915*, early commissions for public monuments in the United States, first in stone, date to the late 18th and early 19th centuries and were designed and made by Europeans. Outdoor, sculptural portraits were also provided by European artists in a predominantly Neoclassical style. The George Washington Monument in New York City was one of the first major monuments designed and produced in the United States with notable bronze statuary. This edifice was not unveiled until 1856. Public monument practice became more common following the onset of the Civil War and later flourished during the City Beautiful movement that began in 1893.

The Gallaudet Monument was erected in 1854, representing a significant, early example of a public monument with decorative sculpture designed and created in America. The elaborate, architectural structure stood over 20' in height and displayed the carved relief sculptures designed by John Carlin. The unique relief sculptures broke from fashionable Neoclassical styles, particularly the front artwork depicting Gallaudet as a common, seated person, educating deaf youth. The back relief carving, as previously noted, is possibly the first manual alphabet sculptural carving and shown on a public monument.



View of the front relief carving designed by John Carlin and carved in James G. Batterson's Marble Steam Works in Hartford. The artwork breaks from Neoclassical style and is an example of early American public art. Photo: Detail from photograph in the Archives of the Cogswell Heritage House, ASD,